



CONGRESSMAN BRAD SHERMAN  
REPORTS ON

# SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

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## ACTION TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

### SOCIAL SECURITY “LOCK BOX”

As a CPA, Sherman knows that the long-term solvency of Social Security and Medicare depends on Congress. He will continue to work against fiscally irresponsible proposals to provide unwarranted tax breaks for giant corporations which will impair the government’s ability to pay Social Security benefits in future years. Sherman has consistently opposed using Social Security and Medicare funds for other purposes.

### WE MUST NOT PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security and Medicare permit millions of American families to retire with the dignity and security that they worked a lifetime to ensure. The proposals to privatize Social Security involve lower benefits, unless the beneficiary is willing to select risky investments and happens to select stocks that perform well. Sherman will fight against efforts to privatize Social Security, because he believes it would be irresponsible to replace a guarantee with a gamble.



Brad Sherman addresses a local meeting on critical issues concerning Social Security and Medicare.

### PATIENTS’ BILL OF RIGHTS

Sherman is a co-sponsor of the bipartisan *Patients’ Bill of Rights* which would give patients the right to an independent review when an insurance company or HMO denies access to a specialist or refuses to pay for an operation.

### FIGHTING CUTS IN MEDICARE

#### BENEFIT PAYMENTS TO PHYSICIANS

Every January 1, Medicare adjusts the fees it pays to physicians. Unfortunately, using a flawed formula, the Administration reduced Medicare’s physician fee schedule by 5.2% this year. As a result, some physicians and HMOs are dropping out of the Medicare program. To address this problem, Sherman co-sponsored the *Medicare Physician Payment Fairness Act*.

### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

Too many seniors have too much of their savings drained by the need to pay for costly prescription medications. Last month, Sherman voted against an inadequate plan that would not have provided the coverage that seniors need, and would require participants to buy Medi-gap insurance from private insurance companies. Sherman voted for the stronger plan, which would provide drug coverage as part of Medicare and would pay 80% of participants’ drug costs until they reach \$2000, and 100% of costs over \$2000.

### PROTECTING RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Some who receive Social Security benefits or survivor’s benefits discover that the retirement income they counted on has been reduced by technicalities known as “government pension offsets” or “windfall elimination provisions,” because they worked for state or local government. Most California teachers and firefighters fall into this category. While during much of their careers they worked for government entities which did not participate in Social Security, those affected by this rule also worked for years in private sector employment or are the surviving spouse of someone who did. Retirees should receive the benefits they are entitled to based on the contributions they or their deceased spouse paid into the Social Security system. To fix this problem, and to provide fair treatment for California teachers and firefighters, Sherman co-sponsored the *Social Security Fairness Act*, which would repeal these pension offsets.

Sherman also co-sponsored the *Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act*, which prohibits employer health plans from making post-retirement reductions in retirees’ health benefits.